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Volume 16, Issue 3 3/17

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NGC and Chen Gi Mao Form NGC Advanced Chinese Authentication Bureau

Posted on 3/27/2017

An extremely rare 1897 Ferracute Szechuan pattern set marked the NGC Advanced Chinese Authentication Bureau's first evaluation.

Numismatic Guaranty Corporation® (NGC®) and noted numismatist Chen Gi Mao have announced that they will form the NGC Advanced Chinese Authentication Bureau (ACAB). The partnership combines the experience and expertise of NGC, a leading third-party coin grading service established in 1987, and Chen Gi Mao, one of the most respected vintage Chinese coin specialists.

Mr. Chen has been a professional numismatist for more than 45 years, during which time he has handled nearly all of the rarest and most important vintage Chinese gold and silver coins. In 1975, he co-founded the Taipei Numismatic Society, where he served as a council member. He also founded the highly respected Dingfong Auction as well as several other numismatic companies.

Steven R. Eichenbaum, CEO of NGC, and Chen Gi Mao at NGC Shanghai's Office.

A serious student of vintage Chinese coins, Mr. Chen wrote the *Illustrated Catalogue of Sinkiang Gold and Silver Coins* (1989) and the *Sinkiang Gold and Silver Coin Catalog* (2016). He also provided valuation estimates and pictures from Lin Kwo Ming's famous *Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Gold & Silver Coins*.

Vintage Chinese coins, defined as those struck prior to the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, are extremely diverse with coins issued in a variety of metals by relatively autonomous mints around the country. As China's economy and coin collecting hobby have grown in recent decades, values for many vintage Chinese coins have skyrocketed, resulting in a proliferation of highly deceptive counterfeits.

The complexity of these coins coupled with the significant liability presented by counterfeits led NGC to be more conservative towards vintage Chinese coins. As NGC seeks to expand its services in China, however, it recognizes the need for a comprehensive approach that includes a conscientious look at vintage Chinese coins.

With Mr. Chen, NGC has found a world-class specialist with a desire to build the finest team of vintage Chinese coin authenticators ever assembled. Mr. Chen, who has been appointed an NGC Senior Consultant, will lead the NGC ACAB in conjunction with the NGC grading team. He will also be responsible for finding and training additional authentication specialists in China.

The NGC ACAB is based at the newly expanded offices of NGC Shanghai Business Information Consulting Co., Ltd. (NGC Shanghai), NGC's wholly owned Chinese subsidiary. All vintage Chinese coins that are submitted to NGC in China will be evaluated by the NGC ACAB. Once determined to be authentic, the coins will be assigned a grade by NGC's grading team and encapsulated with the distinctive NGC ACAB Red Dragon label. Only those coins that have been evaluated by the NGC ACAB will receive this special label.

China (1897) Silver Dollar Szechuan L&M-345 Ferracute Pattern
with the NGC ACAB Red Dragon Label
NGC SP 65
Click image to enlarge.

The first coins evaluated by the NGC ACAB were ten extremely rare pattern coins struck in 1897 for the newly established Imperial mint in Szechuan Province by the Ferracute Machine Company of New Jersey. Considered to be among the most important and valuable coins in vintage Chinese numismatics, these pieces were made after Ferracute was selected by the Imperial Government of China to provide presses and other equipment for mints in Hupeh and Szechuan Provinces.

On March 24, 1897, Ferracute demonstrated these presses for US Mint officials by striking several tests pieces, called “patterns” by numismatists. Only a handful of these patterns survived, and just three complete sets are known to exist.

One of these sets was recently submitted to NGC for certification. The coins were professionally conserved by Numismatic Conservation Services (NCS), an independent affiliate of NGC, and then evaluated by the NGC ACAB.

The set, which has now been graded and encapsulated by NGC with the NGC ACAB Red Dragon Label, includes the following coins: a silver 7 mace and 2 candareens (dollar) graded NGC SP 65, a silver 3 mace and 6 candareens (50 cents) graded NGC SP 63, a silver 1 mace and 4.4 candareens (20 cents) graded NGC SP 65, a silver 7.2 candareens (10 cents) graded NGC SP 65, a silver 3.6 candareens (5 cents) graded NGC SP 65, a brass 7 mace and 2 candareens (dollar) graded NGC SP 63, a brass 3 mace and 6 candareens (50 cents) graded NGC SP 64+, a brass 1 mace and 4.4 candareens (20 cents) graded NGC SP 66, a brass 7.2 candareens (10 cents) graded NGC SP 65 and a brass 3.6 candareens (5 cents) graded NGC SP 64.

A gallery with images of the NGC-certified 1897 Szechuan Ferracute Pattern Set will be posted to the NGC websites, NGCcoin.com and NGCcoin.cn, shortly.

Coins certified by NGC, including those encapsulated with the NGC ACAB Red Dragon Label, are backed by the comprehensive NGC Guarantee of grade and authenticity. This guarantee gives collectors and dealers greater confidence because it provides an owner of an NGC-certified coin with several possible remedies in the rare event that NGC mistakenly certified a counterfeit or overgraded the coin. The NGC Guarantee can be read in English at NGCcoin.com/Guarantee or Chinese at NGCcoin.cn/Guarantee.

“Over several decades, Mr. Chen has proven himself to possess phenomenal knowledge and ability with regards to vintage Chinese coins,” says Steven R. Eichenbaum, CEO of NGC. “The addition of Mr. Chen puts NGC in a completely different league and, as he trains other vintage authenticators and graders, NGC’s services for these coins will only continue to improve.”

“Although we have taken a conservative approach towards vintage Chinese coins in the past due to their significant complexity and the pervasiveness of counterfeits, Mr. Chen’s remarkable expertise gives us the confidence to pursue these coins much more aggressively,” adds Eichenbaum. “I expect this to be a game changer for NGC and the vintage Chinese coin market.”

“I am very pleased to join NGC at this important period of growth for the company and for the coin collecting hobby in China,” says Mr. Chen. “NGC’s impeccable reputation for accuracy and integrity, coupled with input from vintage Chinese coin experts such as myself, will result in superior services for collectors and dealers of these coins.”

The NGC ACAB will formally begin operations in Shanghai on March 13, 2017. There is no additional fee to submit coins to the NGC ACAB and the standard NGC Submission Forms may be used.

All submissions in China should be made to an NGC Official Submission Center. To learn how to submit and view a list of Official Submission Centers in China, visit NGCcoin.cn/Submissions.

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United States

NGC Special Label for 1792-2017 American Liberty Gold Coin

Posted on 3/14/2017

1792-2017 American Liberty Gold $100 coins will be encapsulated with NGC's American Liberty Flag label in the three-prong EdgeView® holder.

The US Mint has announced that the 1792-2017 American Liberty US Mint 225th Anniversary Gold $100 will go on sale April 6. The coin is the first to portray the allegorical figure of Liberty, which has graced United States coins since 1792, as an African-American woman.

The reverse of the coin depicts an American bald eagle in flight, while the edge features 225TH ANNIVERSARY in raised letters. Struck in high relief from one ounce of .9999 fine gold, this coin will have a maximum mintage of 100,000 pieces.

Click image to enlarge.

NGC will celebrate the 1792-2017 US Mint 225th Anniversary American Liberty Gold $100 coins by encapsulating them with its stunning American Flag Liberty label for no additional fee. In addition, every 1792-2017 American Liberty gold coin submitted to NGC will be encapsulated in a three-prong EdgeView® holder to better facilitate viewing of the coin's lettered edge.

Coins received by NGC within the first 30 days of their release are eligible for NGC's popular **Early Releases®** and **First Releases®** designations. Learn more about Early Releases and First Releases here. For Early Releases / First Releases cutoff dates, click here. Scroll below to see detailed submission instructions.

Submission Instructions:

- Submit the US Mint 225th Anniversary coins under the **Modern** grading tier or higher. If Early Releases or First Releases is desired, select **Early Releases** or **First Releases**. If you do not want the Early Releases or First Releases designations, the American Liberty Flag label will still be included by default for no additional fee with the Modern grading tier fee.
- To qualify for Early Releases or First Releases, coins must be received by NGC before the Early Releases/First Releases cutoff date.
- The default label will be NGC's American Flag Liberty Label #487 (shown below):

- If you prefer the US Mint 225th Anniversary label (shown below), write **US Mint 225th Anniversary #768** on the submission form. There is no additional fee for this label. If no label is requested you will receive the American Liberty Flag label.

- If you would like Mint packaging returned, select “Return Mint Packaging” in section 3 of the NGC Submission Form.
- Please note that NGC’s First Day of Issue designation is available for qualifying bulk submissions only.

Questions? Contact NGC Customer Service at service@NGCcoin.com or 1-800-NGC-COIN (1-800-642-2646).

Dealers should contact Miles Standish at Miles@NGCcoin.com or 949-922-0515 or Scott Heller at SHeller@NGCcoin.com for bulk submissions.

Collectors Society paid members can submit their coins directly to NGC. Not an NGC Collectors Society member? Paid memberships start at just $39/year. Join today.

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NGC Certifies New Shield Nickel Variety

Posted on 3/14/2017

This 1868 Shield Nickel with a repunched date is one of several first identified at NGC.

Numismatic Guaranty Corporation has certified a newly discovered variety for the popular Shield Nickel series, which is known by collectors as a fertile hunting ground for such discoveries. The new entry has its date entirely repunched counter-clockwise to the first punching, with numerals 18 duplicated above the final impression and numerals 68 duplicated below.

1868/1868 Rev Of 68 5C VP-026
NGC Unc Details
Click images to enlarge.

This nickel displays Reverse IIb, more commonly called the Reverse of 1868. Shield Nickels dated 1868 are seen with both this reverse hub and the more

plentiful Reverse of 1867. Though the dies appear to have been fairly fresh and unworn, the obverse is dramatically shattered, with extensive cracking that is most evident in and around the date.

Detail of 1868 Shield Nickel VP-026
Click images to enlarge.

NGC Research Director David W. Lange identified the new variety, which had been submitted by a customer as an "overdate." Unable to find it in any reference books or on series specialist Howard Spindel's Shield Nickel variety disc, Lange sent photos of the coin to Spindel. That authority confirmed it was previously unknown and assigned his number S2-3012 to the variety. This is just the latest of several Shield Nickel varieties discovered at NGC and subsequently added to the Spindel catalog.

NGC has labeled this new variety as VP-026 within its own VarietyPlus catalog, and it was graded UNC Details, Improperly Cleaned. Photos of the coin may be seen at NGC's VarietyPlus.

Variety coins may be submitted to NGC for its VarietyPlus attribution service for a fee of $15, which is in addition to the tier cost of grading. For coins already certified by NGC, varieties may be added for this same $15 fee, which includes the cost of reholdering.

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United States

Rhett Jeppson, First US Mint Principal Deputy Director, to Autograph NGC Labels

Posted on 3/13/2017

The former principal deputy director of the US Mint will hand sign NGC certification labels.

Rhett Jeppson, the first Principal Deputy Director of the US Mint, has agreed to autograph certification labels exclusively for Numismatic Guaranty Corporation® (NGC®).

Jeppson helmed the US Mint from January 2015 to January 2017 in his capacity as Principal Deputy Director, and on May 19, 2015, he was nominated as Director of the US Mint. Under his watch the US Mint released a number of popular special issues, including:

- The 2015-W American Liberty High Relief Gold $100, the highest denomination gold coin ever issued by the United States;
- The 2016 American Liberty Silver Medals, which sold out just six minutes after their release;
- The 2016-W Centennial Gold Mercury Dime, which sold out in less than an hour; the 2016-W Centennial Gold Standing Liberty Quarter; and the 2016-W Centennial Gold Walking Liberty Half Dollar;
- The 2016-W 30th Anniversary American Silver Eagles, the first lettered edge coins in the widely collected series, and;
- The 2017-P Lincoln Cent, the first cent issued with the “P” mintmark of

Philadelphia.

Before leaving the US Mint in January, Jeppson laid the groundwork for the production and release of the 2017 American Liberty US Mint 225th Anniversary Gold $100. It is the first coin to portray the allegorical figure of Liberty, which has graced United States coins since 1792, as an African-American woman. This groundbreaking coin was covered extensively in news reports when it was announced earlier this year.

The American Liberty US Mint 225th Anniversary Gold $100 is scheduled to be released on April 6 and will be struck in high relief from one ounce of .9999 fine gold with 225th ANNIVERSARY in raised letters on the edge. It will be followed by a silver medal released mid-year and a set of silver medals released at year's end.

Prior to his appointment as the Principal Deputy Director of the US Mint, Jeppson served as the Acting Chief Operating Officer of the Small Business Administration, where he was also the Associate Administrator of Veterans Business Development. A veteran himself, Jeppson joined the US Marine Corps in 1987 after he received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Florida.

Jeppson was deployed in Operation Desert Storm in Iraq and, after alternating between active duty and other jobs, was reactivated in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. He served in varied roles including Chief of Current Operations for the US Marine Forces Europe and Deputy Director of Operations for US Forces—Afghanistan. He was later assigned to US Special Operations Command in Tampa, and eventually appointed Deputy Director of Operations for US Forces—Afghanistan.

"We are honored that Rhett, a distinguished veteran and chief administrator of the US Mint, has agreed to autograph labels for NGC," says Mark Salzberg, Chairman of NGC. "The pairing of labels hand-signed by Rhett with the important coins released under his watch will create particularly special collectibles."

"NGC's innovative programs, such as its authentic hand-signed labels, have brought many new collectors into the hobby and I am eager to build on this success," adds Jeppson. "I look forward to working with NGC to expand the coin

collecting hobby to appeal to more diverse demographics."

Coins encapsulated with Rhett Jeppson hand-signed NGC certification labels will be available from select retailers later this month.

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Modern Chinese Varieties: 1985 Gold 100Y Confucius

Posted on 3/14/2017

This is the 26th installment of our monthly column devoted to modern Chinese varieties.

This month's featured coin is the 1985 G100Y Confucius coin that comes with and without a serif on the bottom of the “1” of the date on the obverse of the coin.

Below are photos that show the date with the bottom serif **(Photos 1 & 2)**.

Obverse side of a 1985 G100Y Confucius coin with the serif **(left)**
and close up of coin with the serif **(right)**
Click images to enlarge.

The pictures below are examples of a coin without the bottom serif **(Photos 3 & 4)**.

Obverse side of a 1985 G100Y Confucius coin without the serif **(left)**
and close up of coin without the serif **(right)**
Click images to enlarge.

Both examples share a common reverse featuring Confucius as the central device **(Photo 5)**.

Reverse side of a 1985 G100Y Confucius coin
Click image to enlarge.

Look for another interesting variety to be featured next month.

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United States

NGC Registry News: 78 New Choices

Posted by Collectors Society on 3/14/2017

We've added many new sets to the NGC Registry, including China Lunar medals.

The NGC Registry Set offerings are always expanding, and we have several new sets available as of February. These sets represent coins from all around the world. A particular focus this month has been on China medals in the Lunar category. Whether you prefer to collect silver medals, brass medals, copper-nickel medals or all of them, there are several new Registry sets available for your coins.

We have also just released Multi-Country sets for Gold Sovereigns. Check out these eagerly-awaited sets here.

We appreciate your requests for new sets and look forward to offering new collecting options to you, our valued customers. For February 2017, we have **78** new world sets! Here is what we compiled for this month:

New Sets:

- Australia-Commemorative: Silver $1, 2012, Proof
- Australia-Commemorative: Silver $1, 2014, Proof
- Australia-Commemorative: Silver $1, 2015, Proof
- Australia-Commemorative: Silver $1, 2016, Proof
- Belgium: 2 Euros, 1999-Date, Mint State
- China - Empire & Provinces: Tai Ching, Silver $1, 1910-1911, Circulation Issue
- China - Panda: Panda Coin Collection Expo Set, 2013-Date, Complete
- China-Lunar: Lunar Medals, 23mm, Brass, 1981-1992, Mint State
- China-Lunar: Lunar Medals, 23mm, Brass Gilt, 1981-1992, Mint State
- China-Lunar: Lunar Medals, 30mm, Non-Silver, 1981-1992, Mint State
- China-Lunar: Lunar Medals, 33mm, Brass, 1981-1992, Mint State
- China-Lunar: Lunar Medals, 33mm, Brass Gilt, 1981-1992, Mint State
- China-Lunar: Lunar Medals, 33mm, Brass, 2005-2016, Mint State
- China-Lunar: Lunar Medals, 33mm, Brass, 2017-2028, Mint State
- Cuba: Peso, Type Set, 1977-2000, Circulation Issue
- Cuba: Centavo, 1963-1982, Complete Circulation Issue
- Cuba: Centavo, 1983-1998, Complete Circulation Issue
- Cuba: Two Centavos, 1983-1986, Complete Circulation Issue
- Cuba: Five Centavos, 1963-1972, Complete Circulation Issue
- Cuba: Twenty Centavos, 1962-1980, Complete Circulation Issue
- Cuba: Gold 50 Pesos, 1988-1990, Circulation Issue
- Cuba: Centavo Coinage Type Set, 1963-1998, Circulation Issue
- Cuba: Finland: 2 Euros, 1999-Date, Mint State
- Cuba: France: 2 Euros, 1999-Date, Mint State
- Cuba: Germany: 2 Euros, 2002-Date, Mint State
- Great Britain - Decimal: Silver 10 Pence, 1992-Date, Proof
- Great Britain - Decimal: Silver 50 Pence (Elizabeth II) 1992-Date, Proof
- Great Britain - Decimal: Silver 2 Pounds, Lunar Series, 2014-Date, Mint

State
- Great Britain - Decimal: Silver Five Pounds (Elizabeth II) 2016-Date, Mint State
- Great Britain - Decimal: Silver Ten Pounds, (Elizabeth II), 5oz, 2012-Date, Proof
- Great Britain - Decimal: Silver Twenty Pounds, (Elizabeth II), 2013-Date, Mint State
- Great Britain - Sovereigns and Bullion: Britannia, Silver 10 Pence, 2013-Date, Proof
- Great Britain - Sovereigns and Bullion: Britannia Silver 2 Pounds, Lunar Series, 2014-Date, Mint State
- Great Britain - Sovereigns and Bullion: Britannia, Silver 10 Pounds, 2013-Date, Proof
- Great Britain - Sovereigns and Bullion: Britannia Silver 2 Pounds, Lunar Series, 2014-Date, Mint State
- Great Britain - Decimal: Silver 2 Pounds, Lunar Series, 2014-Date, Mint State
- Greece: King George I, Gold Issues, 1876-1884, Circulation Issue
- Greece: John Kapodistrias 1828-1831 Complete Circulation Issue
- Greece: Type Set, King Otto I, 1832-1862, Circulation Issue
- Greece: 1967 Revolution, Complete Set
- Greece: 100 Drachmes, 1978-1999, Circulation Issue
- Greece: 2 Euros, 2002-Date, Mint State
- Iceland: Republic, Type Set, 1946-1980, Circulation Issue
- Iceland: Silver & Gold Commemoratives, 1961-1974, Proof
- India - Princely States: Kutch Type Set, George VI, 1936/VS1993 - 1941/VS1998, Circulation Issue
- India - Princely States: Kutch Type Set, Vijayarajji, 1942/VS1998 - 1948//VS2004, Circulation Issue
- India - Princely States: Travancore Type Set, Rama Varma VI, 1901-1931, Circulation Issue
- India - Princely States: Baroda Type Set, Sayaji Rao III, VS1940-56/1883-1899, Milled Coinage, Circulation Issue
- India - Princely States: Hyderabad, Rupee, AH1330//1 - AH1343//14, Circulation Issue
- India - Princely States: Gwalior, 1/4 Anna, VS1944-VS1999, Circulation Issue Complete
- India - Princely States: Jaipur, Rupee, 1901//22 - 1949//28, Circulation Issue
- India - Princely States: Alwar, Rupee, 1877-1891, Milled Coinage, Circulation Issue
- Ireland: 2 Euros, 2002-Date, Mint State

- Korea: Silver, Pandas, 1995-Date, Proof
- Latvia: 2 Euros, 2014-Date, Mint State
- Liberia: Silver $10, 1985-Date, Proof
- Liberia: Gold $10, 1972-Date, Proof
- Liberia: Gold $20, 1972-Date, Proof
- Liberia: Gold $25, 1965-Date, Proof
- Lithuania: 2 Euros, 2015-Date, Mint State
- Luxembourg: 2 Euros, 2002-Date, Mint State
- Malta: 2 Euros, 2008-Date, Mint State
- Marshall Islands: $5, Copper-Nickel, 1988-Date, Mint State
- Marshall Islands: Silver $50, 1989-Date, Proof
- Mexico: Medallic Silver Bullion Coinage, 1949-1980, Mint State
- Mombasa: 1888-1890 Mint State, Complete
- Mombasa: 1888-1890 Proof & Specimen, Complete
- Monaco: 2 Euros, 2001-Date, Mint State
- Multi-Country (Incl. Euro): Gold Sovereign, One Per Ruler Per Mint, 1817-Date, Circulation Issue
- Multi-Country: Victoria, Type Set, One Sovereign Per Mint, 1838-1901, Circulation Issue
- Multi-Country: Edward VII, Type Set, One Sovereign Per Mint, 1902-1910, Circulation Issue
- Multi-Country: George V, Type Set, One Sovereign Per Mint, 1911-1932, Circulation Issue
- Netherlands: 2 Euros, 1999-Date, Mint State
- Palau: Silver $5, Pacific Wildlife Series, 2006-Date, Proof
- Palau: Silver $5, World Of Wonders Series, 2009-Date, Proof
- Palau: Silver $5, Mountains & Flora Series, 2009-Date, Proof
- Portugal: 2 Euros, 2002-Date, Mint State
- San Marino: 2 Euros, 2002-Date, Mint State

Do you have an NGC-certified coin in your hand and you're not sure where it may fit in the NGC Registry? We are here to help with requests and with any other questions you may have. Feel free to send us an email and let us know how we can help. Reach us easily via email at **registry@NGCcoin.com**.

If you're not familiar with the NGC Registry, take some time to explore it, and see the many collecting options that are available. It is completely free. If you have any questions, you may also click below for our help page:

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United States

NGC Accepting Submissions at Central States

Posted on 3/14/2017

Submit your coins at the NGC booth during the Central States Convention in Schaumburg, IL.

NGC will be accepting regular submissions for all service levels* at the Central States Numismatic Convention, at the Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Hotel starting on Thursday, April 27 - noon on Saturday, April 29, 2017. NGC will be at Booth 2008. Check with show staff for cut-off time. **Cut-off time may change due to submission volumes.** All submissions will be sent to our office in Sarasota, FL. Services include World Services, Ancient Coin Services, Bulk, PHOTO PROOF® and more. Check with show representatives for details.

Note:

- Due to the special handling required, NGC does not accept submissions of the following coins at this show for regular service submissions to be returned to the NGC offices: coins for First/Early Releases designations, coins NGC requires submitted in original Mint sealed packing, coins over 3.5" (90 mm) in diameter and .39" (10 mm) in depth, Coin & Chronicles sets, Coin & Currency sets, March of Dimes 3-coin set, West Point 2-coin set, San Francisco 2-coin Proof set, 30th Anniversary Eagles, 25th Anniversary Eagles, 20th Anniversary Eagles, American Liberty Series and 10th Anniversary Platinum Sets. These submissions must be sent directly to Sarasota, FL, by the submitter.

*Does not include 5-ounce coins.

Questions should be directed to NGC customer service at service@NGCcoin.com or 1-800-NGC-COIN (642-2646).

Visit our table for answers to any questions about the services offered by NGC. Please remember that NGC does not provide opinions or free evaluations of coins at trade shows.

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United States

NGC Ancients: Corinthian-style Staters

Posted on 3/14/2017

These coins are collected in many ways, including by the city of issue, the symbols, the engraving style, and the peculiarities of the main designs.

Among the most recognized of all ancient coins are the staters of Corinth, an important city at the juncture of the Greek mainland and the Peloponnesus. The fully developed type shows on its obverse the mythological winged horse Pegasus, and on its reverse the head of the goddess Athena with a helmet pulled up such that it rests upon her forehead.

They were so popular in commerce that eventually they were struck not only at Corinth but at a number of other cities in Greece, Italy and Sicily, most of which were colonies of Corinth.

Click images to enlarge.

Early Corinthian staters, including this one of c.550 to 500 B.C., have an artistic design only on the obverse – Pegasus in flight. The curious letter below Pegasus is the Greek letter Koppa in an archaic form, which denotes Corinth as the mint. The reverse bears the impression of a utilitarian incuse punch.

Click images to enlarge.

In the late 6th and early 5th Centuries B.C., Corinthian staters began to feature artistic designs on both the obverse and the reverse. Though Pegasus remained the obverse type, the helmeted head of Athena replaced the incuse punch on the reverse. On the earliest issues (and for most issues of the 5th Century) the goddesses' head is set within a deep square formed by the punch-like reverse die.

Click images to enlarge.

This issue of the 4th Century B.C. has the familiar round, broad planchet that is typical for the most productive era of striking. In this case Athena's helmet is adorned with a laurel wreath; an eagle stands behind.

Click images to enlarge.

In Western Greece one of the main Corinthian colonies was Leucas, which struck a large quantity of Corinthian-style staters. This one of c.350 to 320 B.C. is particularly interesting with its ‘springing’ Pegasus. In this case the Greek letter lambda, for Leucas, appears on both sides.

Click images to enlarge.

Ambracia, another Corinthian colony in Western Greece, issued this stater from c.360 to 338 B.C. It is unusual in that Athena’s helmet is decorated with a large horse-hair crest; behind that is an upright spear.

Click images to enlarge.

Yet another successful Corinthian colony in Western Greece, Anactorium, issued this stater of c.350 to 300 B.C., which bears a scallop shell behind Athena’s head. A clever monogram of the letters ANA, representing the city’s name, appears beneath Pegasus.

Click images to enlarge.

A smaller Corinthian-style helmet with a horse-hair crest is used as a symbol behind the head of Athena on this stater of Argos Amphilochicum, a city near the western coast of Greece. Despite issuing a large number of Corinthian-style staters, it was not a colony of Corinth.

Click images to enlarge.

The island of Corcyra, which had been home to colonists from Corinth, issued a small number of Corinthian-style staters, including this one of c.338 to 250 B.C. Its most interesting feature is the full ethnic ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ, which identifies it as a coin of the Corcyrans.

Click images to enlarge.

The Italian peninsula wasn't far from the shore of western Greece – hence the great deal of trade conducted between the Greek colonists in both regions. One Greek city in the 'toe' of Italy, Locri Epizephyrii, issued this Corinthian-style stater sometime between c.350 and 275 B.C. Like the aforementioned issue of Corcyra, its ethnic is spelled out rather than abbreviated.

Click images to enlarge.

A neighbor of Locri in the 'toe' of Italy was Medma, which produced a small issue of Corinthian-style staters from c.330 to 317 B.C. In this case the mint mark is not prominently displayed, but is secreted beneath the truncation of Athena's bust.

Click images to enlarge.

A third city in the Italian 'toe' to strike Corinthian-style staters was Hipponium, which seems to have issued them c.350 to 300 B.C. Like Medma (above), it also was a colony of its neighbor Locri. The only symbol on this issue is a caduceus.

Click images to enlarge.

This stater was a product of Syracuse, the most important Greek city in the Western Mediterranean. Attributed to c.344 to 317 B.C., it was struck about four centuries after Syracuse had been founded by Corinth as a colony in the 8th Century B.C. Its ethnic ΣΥΡΑΚΟΣΙΩΝ is fully rendered.

Click images to enlarge.

Also from Syracuse is this stater issued by King Agathocles (317 to 289 B.C.). In keeping with the numismatic trends in Sicily, Athena was moved to the obverse and Pegasus was moved to the reverse. On this piece Athena's helmet is beautifully adorned with a horse-hair crest and a leaping griffin. A trisceles, the personal badge of Agathocles, appears beneath Pegasus. Along the periphery of the reverse is the city's full ethnic, ΣΥΡΑΚΟΣΙΩΝ.

Click images to enlarge.

This Corinthian-style stater of Agathocles (note the trisceles below Pegasus) was struck at Syracuse, c.304 to 289 B.C., at a reduced weight standard of about 6.90 grams. These coins weigh considerably less than the normal 8.60 grams of the Corinthian standard. Later still, an even-further-reduced stater of about 5.50 grams was issued by the Syracusan King Hieron II (275 to 215 B.C.), by which time scholars believe the coin may have been intended as an octobol or a tridrachm rather than a stater.

Interested in reading more articles on Ancient coins? Click here

Images courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group.

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Counterfeit Detection: 1903-S Added S Morgan Dollar

Posted on 3/14/2017

A prominent area of discoloration around the mintmark is a sign that this Morgan Dollar is a counterfeit.

The vast majority of the more than 1.2 million Morgan dollars struck at the San Francisco Mint in 1903 entered circulation, either immediately or as they were trickled out from the Mint until the 1950s. By the late 1960s, when the Treasury looked to disperse its hoard of unreleased silver dollars, no bags of 1903-S Morgan Dollars remained. As a result, the 1903-S Morgan Dollar is rare in all but low circulated grades. This is evidenced by the NGC Census, which shows that the average grade for a 1903-S Morgan Dollar is approximately VF 30.

Due to its rarity in high grades, virtually any About Uncirculated or Mint State 1903-S Morgan Dollar is worth well over $1,000. On the other hand, Philadelphia 1903 Morgan Dollars are much more obtainable with a mintage four times that of their S-Mint counterparts. The large value difference between these two issues has led counterfeiters to alter some Philadelphia pieces to show the “S” mintmark of the San Francisco Mint. One example is the coin below.

Counterfeit 1903-S Morgan Dollar with Added Mintmark

Click images to enlarge.

As you can see in the images above, the coin clearly has high AU details at the very least. There is, however, a prominent area of discoloration around the mintmark that is visible even without magnification. Upon closer examination, this mintmark looks even more unusual.

Detail Added “S” Mintmark on the “1903-S” Morgan Dollar
Click images to enlarge.

The discoloration around the mintmark area is due a reaction between the adhesive that was used to affix the mintmark and the coin’s surface. It is likely that the surface looked normal, or nearly normal, at first and then became discolored over time. If one were to apply acetone to this area, the adhesive would almost certainly dissolve and the mintmark would literally fall off the coin.

It is essential to always examine the mintmark (as well as the date) on any key date coin. If a slight alteration to a common issue can make it appear to be a rare coin, it is ripe for targeting by a counterfeiter. If you want to be safe, buy a coin that is certified by NGC—these coins are guaranteed to be authentic.

Interested in more Counterfeit Detection articles, click here.

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United States

USA Coin Album: The Numismatic Legacy of Robert Friedberg - Conclusion

Posted on 3/14/2017

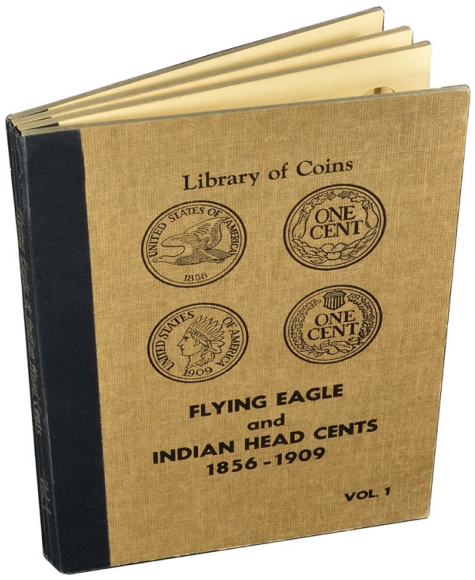
The first modern coin album, designed by Friedberg, heralded a peak in the hobby's popularity.

Last month I described how coin dealer Robert Friedberg became the overseer of a large chain of department store coin hobby concessions. These were not owned by the actual stores, but rather by Friedberg and partner Jacques Minkus. Friedberg supplied the collectable coins offered at each store, while Minkus stocked the stamps that were likewise sold at the hobby counter.

One of the things that became evident to Robert Friedberg by the mid 1950s was that existing coin albums and folders left much to be desired. His stores were then stocking the National line of coin albums published by Wayte Raymond, Inc. and distributed by Alan W. Faxon. The folders sold over each counter were of Whitman's familiar blue line still in production today. Both products appear in pre-1959 issues of the catalog put out by Minkus titled Stamp and Coin News. This publication was given out at the stores to new customers or sent by mail to existing ones. Each issue was identical in content throughout the chain, but it was custom printed with a particular store's name on the front cover.

The National album had not been improved since the 1930s, yet it remained the industry standard at that time and the album of choice for advanced collectors. Friedberg set about to design a much better album that would eliminate the loose leaf pages and separate binder of the Raymond product. After showing some prototypes to other dealers and making small adjustments based on their comments, he was ready to announce the new line of albums in the spring of 1959. The June issues of both *The Numismatist* and *The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* featured multi-page ads for the Library of Coins, as Friedberg's product

was named.



Each Library of Coins album was self-bound with heavy, black tape, thus eliminating the need for an expensive ring binder. The covers and pages were made of the same thick cardstock, reducing the variety of parts needed. The title of each album was labeled on its spine in gold, whereas the National album required a separate, paste-on label. When closed, the new albums stood upright and were much more slender than the Raymond binder. Designed to appear as actual books, each album was assigned a volume number within the “Library,” and this number was placed prominently at the lower right of the front cover, as well as being repeated on the spine. The clear plastic slides used in National albums were repeated for the Library of Coins, the sole feature that these albums had in common. Priced at $1.95 for two-page albums, $2.95 for three pages and $3.95 for four pages, the Library of Coins cost less than a comparable National album, in addition to being more convenient. Its success was immediate, and within five years the National Coin Album, as well as its American-brand clone, both went out of production.

The original emission of LOC albums included just 21 titles, these being for the popular series of 20th Century United States coins from cent through dollar. By year’s end, six more titles had been added, and these provided unprinted openings for each denomination. Albums for commemorative coins, proof and mint sets and the Canadian decimal series of coinage joined the line in 1960. Finally, albums for early United States coin series from half cent through trade dollar were added a year later. Unlike the albums of rival publishers that were created during the booming hobby years of 1960-64, the LOC albums for these early series included all of the popular varieties then found in the Red Book (*A Guide Book of United States Coins*). This has endeared them to generations of coin collectors, and vintage titles offered in the secondary market are still bringing prices higher than those of currently produced coin albums.

All good things must come to an end, and some of the same changes in the coin hobby that drove department store coin counters into extinction also affected sales of the LOC line of albums. In addition, production costs rose so rapidly in the late 1960s that the publisher resorted to an experiment with printing albums in Hong Kong. The resulting product was disappointing, and the Library of Coins was discontinued after 1971.

These albums are still fondly remembered and highly sought by veteran

collectors, both for the storing of coin sets and as collectibles in their own right. I'm such a collector myself, and I own nearly 200 examples covering all editions and varieties. This passion has driven me to write a series of books detailing the history of coin albums in America and cataloging all known varieties. Volume Two, published by PennyBoard Press, covers the entire line of albums produced by The Coin and Currency Institute, and it also details that company's various books. Featured, too, is a history of Capitol Coin Company, as well as biographies of Robert Friedberg and his brother Jack, who took over the operation after Robert's untimely passing. The whole story of the amazing coin concession business built by Jacques Minkus and Robert Friedberg is related through the recollections of those who worked for or shopped at its various stores.

David W. Lange's column, "USA Coin Album," appears monthly in The Numismatist, *the official publication of the American Numismatic Association.*

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United States

Chinese Coins: Coins and Cannons

Posted by Peter Anthony on 3/14/2017

Beijing has two purely numismatic museums. The venues and their prestigious sponsors reflect the great significance attached to coins in Chinese culture.

Silhouetted against the sky, one building stands out as our taxi slows to exit the freeway. I nod toward it and ask, “Is that where we are going?” “Yes,” my friend replies. The car turns, rolls across an overpass as ten lanes of Beijing vehicles rush by below, and drops us off along the edge of a busy traffic circle. On foot now, we gingerly thread our way toward the massive structure.

A high stone wall crowds the curb and leaves us little room to avoid the cars that zip by. Its sheer face of carefully fitted charcoal-gray blocks calls to mind Mordor. We make haste to the safety of a broad landing area. There a sign announces, “Panoramic View of Beijing Ancient Coins.” From here it is just a few more paces to the entrance. Inside, shielded from traffic noise, is a peaceful courtyard lined with Magnolia trees.

We are at the Deshengmen Gate. Once it was one of nine fortified entrances to the old city of Beijing. The nine gates were manned by crack troops, the toughest and best-trained in the emperor’s military. The gates controlled entry and egress to the capital city and were repeatedly the sites of pitched battles between Chinese defenders and Mongol bands from the north. Many gates are now completely gone, remembered only in the names of subway stations like Xuanwumen (pronounced Shwen-wu-men) and Fuchengmen.

Fittingly, there is a fascinating military museum on an upper floor of the Deshengmen Gate fortress. On a clear day, a climb to the topmost parapet rewards a visitor with an outstanding view of the city, as well as an appreciation for what a formidable post this was. A couple of antique cannons reinforce the impression. At ground level, though, the former garrison is now dedicated to

coins, not warfare.

The Year of the Rooster in coins and medals. Behind them is the top level of the Deshengmen Gate, once a Beijing military post and now a numismatic museum.

As the sign suggests most of the coins are ancient. Although, my interest is primarily modern Chinese coinage, the exhibits are excellently explained in English. They do a fine job of presenting the development of money in China and why numismatics is important to Chinese culture today. There is a good display of modern paper money, although the best collection in the world can be seen across town at the China Numismatic Museum.

Beijing has two purely numismatic museums. The Beijing Ancient Coins Museum at Deshengmen Gate is part of the Beijing Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage. Across town the China Numismatic Museum operates under the auspices of The People's Bank of China, the nation's central bank. Additionally, the National Museum has a major permanent numismatic display and coins are often seen at other institutions like the Capital Museum.

The many numismatic venues and their prestigious sponsors reflect the great significance attached to coins in Chinese culture. As the Beijing Ancient Coins museum explains, one early factor in the development of this thinking was the inclusion of the emperor's signature on coins.

Today, this tradition of cultural importance continues with the many coins issued for holidays, national and cultural themes. The largest modern cultural series of coins is the Lunar Year coins. It follows the Lunar calendar and its twelve animal symbols make up a twelve-year cycle. We are now in the Year of the Rooster and

there are seventeen different Year of the Rooster coins available. In addition there are countless medals, including some that have a Panda on one face and a rooster on the other. One more is coming soon; a beautiful new bimetallic Show Panda with a lunar theme should be available at the next Singapore International Coin Fair (March 24-26, 2017).

The Chinese Lunar series includes the country's largest gold coin, a 10 kilogram giant 100,000 Yuan with a mintage of just eighteen. Aside from that behemoth, there are gold and silver coins as small as 3 grams (roughly 1/10 oz.) of gold and 30 grams of silver. These coins are very popular gift items in China during the Lunar New Year, or Spring Festival. People often keep them for a lifetime because they represent family, tradition and a living culture. The development of that culture spans thousands of years. It has left us many magnificent monuments—and museums—that echo the past and enrich the present like the Deshengmen Gate.

Note: Last month I mentioned that a double Fu, or good luck, character is used on wedding coins and signs. It is the Chi, or happiness, character that is used in this context. Mea culpa.

Peter Anthony is an expert on Chinese modern coins with a particular focus on Panda coins. He is an analyst for the NGC Chinese Modern Coin Price Guide as well as a consultant on Chinese modern coins.

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NCS Conservation: Glue Residue

Posted on 3/14/2017

The ill effects of glue residue can range from yellow toning to environmental damage.

Residues are not only unattractive but, more importantly, can create permanent surface changes that will damage the coins we value. While many residues do not have specific causes some do. Glue residue can actively change the surface chemistry of a coin and, if not removed, leave it ineligible for NGC grading.

Glue residue is often a raised substance on the surface of a coin and usually on one side in a specific location. The substance is typically a different texture than the coin's original metal surface. With time, glue residue will yellow leaving an unappealing visual indication. Many times, though not always, glue residue will be sticky to the touch and attract further dirt and lint from the immediate environment.

1878-S $1
Yellowed glue residue can be seen on the obverse.
Before conservation
Click images to enlarge.

1878-S $1
Glue residue safely removed with minimal effect on the surface.
After conservation
Click images to enlarge.

A coin can acquire glue residue from a myriad of scenarios. These may include mounting in a holder or frame with a hardened liquid adhesive or held in place with a strip of transparent tape. Coins may have been secured by various adhesive substances for display or storage when it was used in daily commerce and long before it had any additional numismatic value.

When glue residue is present, professional removal is recommended. Removing glue residue can come with some concerns. Most of the time glue residue can be removed from the surface leaving a clean, relatively damage free surface. Many times, however, the glue substance can affect the surface. The result may range from a pattern in the toning to irreversible environmental damage in a clear shape where the glue was. When the visual difference is a case of toning, steps can usually be taken by the NCS conservators to minimize the impact. Permanent environmental damage, however, cannot be easily minimized.

1856C Mexico 8 Escudo Gold
Glue residue in the shape of transparent tape can be seen across the constitution.
Before conservation
Click images to enlarge.

Glue Residue safely removed with minimal effect on the surface.
After conservation
Click images to enlarge.

Glue residue can sometimes be mistaken for a mint error. This is especially true if the glue residue has the impression of another coin in it appearing as a sought after multiple strike mint error. The glue containing the secondary image will be yellowed and will be at least somewhat transparent to see the true surface of the coin. This thick type of glue will often contain air bubbles that even when tiny are observable. The secondary image will also have the visual texture difference even if it's a shiner matte appearance compared to the tie surface of the coin. Glue removal will be recommended in cases where it is masquerading as a mint error. Following removal this coin will be a standard non-mint error coin.

In all cases it is best to remove glue residue from the surface of a coin. NCS Conservation has developed techniques to safely remove the residue while leaving little lasting evidence in cases where environmental damage has not occurred. Following residue removal, most coins can be transferred to NGC for grading and encapsulation.

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From the NGC Archives: 1854 O Seated Liberty Half Dollar

Posted on 3/13/2017

Coins of the New Orleans Mint, particularly those produced before the Civil War, have a certain romance to them.

New Orleans was then one of the more important in the nation, a status which it has never regained. Its role as a principal port of entry for Latin American silver is reflected in the substantial mintages recorded there until the Mint was closed in 1861. Seven years earlier, the Mint was engaged in the mass re-coinage of old tenor (pre-1853) silver coins. Arrowheads placed at either side of the date distinguished the new issues. Though not a rare coin in overall numbers, the 1854-O Half Dollar is quite elusive in high grades.

Click images to enlarge.

This glorious specimen is fully struck, having been produced from very deeply hubbed dies that resulted in an almost medallic relief. The surfaces of this coin are remarkably clean and reveal intense, frosty luster. A hint of golden toning around the peripheries is the perfect finishing touch.

Are you interested in learning more about these coins? Click here to visit the NGC Coin Explorer and read on.

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